

more important disclosures would result. For such a study the Brehm collection, which since his death has been inaccessible, would be indispensable.

Other papers presented by title were 'The Summer Birds of the Bras d'Or Region of Cape Breton Island,' by Jonathan Dwight, Jr. (see *antèa*, pp. 13-16); 'The Summer Birds of the Presidential Range of the White Mountains, N. H.,' by Mr. Arthur P. Chadbourne; and 'Notes on the Night Migration of Birds at Cleveland, Ohio,' by Mr. Wm. F. Dörtenbach.

A committee on Avian Anatomy was appointed, consisting of Drs. Coues and Shufeldt.

Resolutions of thanks were tendered Professor Baird for his kindness in securing the lecture room of the U. S. National Museum as a place of meeting for the Fourth Congress of the Union; to Mr. George T. Angell, President of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for securing protection during the past year to the Gulls and Terns breeding on Muskeget Island, Mass., by placing an agent there, deputized as a game constable, to prevent the destruction of these birds; to the Rev. G. E. Gordon, President of the American Humane Association, for assistance and co-operation rendered the Committee on Protection of North American Birds; also to the 'Science' Publishing Company, and to the 'Forest and Stream' Publishing Company, for valuable assistance rendered the same committee, and especially to the latter Company for its invaluable services in behalf of the Audubon Society.

The election of officers resulted in the re-election of the officers of 1886. At the close of a highly satisfactory three days' session the Union adjourned to meet in Boston, October 10, 1887.

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Pleske on the Birds of the Kola Peninsula.**—The second part of Mr. Theodor Pleske's valuable work\* has just come to hand, and treats of

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\* Uebersicht | der | Säugethiere und Vögel | der | Kola-Halbinsel. | 'Von Theodor Pleske, | Cand. d. Naturwissenschaften. | —Theil II. Vögel und Nachträge. | — (Der Akademie vorgelegt am 5. März 1885.) | —Aus den "Beiträgen zur Kenntniss des Russischen Reiches und der angren- | zenden Länder Asiens, zweite Folge," besonders abgedruckt. | —St. Petersburg, 1886. | Buchdruckerei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. | Wass. Ostr., 9 Lin., No. 12.—8 vo. pp. iv + 515.

the birds of that very interesting region, which embraces the so-called 'Russian Lapland.' Very properly, however, the author has ignored the political borders and includes part of Norwegian East-Finmark west to the Tana-fjord and Tana-elv. Towards the north and east the region is bordered by the Arctic Ocean and the White Sea.

The work, in the first place, is intended to be a report on the author's own explorations in that region during the summer of 1880, but ornithologists will be thankful that he intended it to include the observations of his many predecessors, for he has succeeded in producing a very valuable faunistic monograph of one of the most interesting parts of the Palearctic Region. It will be seen, from the map, that the province in question connects the Scandinavian Peninsula with the Eurasian Continent. Scandinavia during the Glacial Period was probably uninhabited by any birds except, perhaps, the most Arctic species, covered, as it was, with enormous glaciers, and separated from the rest of the Western Palearctic Region by a wide sea covering the German and Russian lowlands and uniting the Arctic and the Atlantic Oceans to the east of the peninsula. When the ice receded and the land rose, an immigration of animal life commenced from two different directions—from the south over the Danish Islands, and from the east over Finland, the broad neck of land which now separates the Baltic and the White Sea. This is not only a hypothesis invented to explain the constitution of the present fauna, but it is an observed fact, for the immigration both ways continues to-day, and the regular additions to the Scandinavian fauna during this century can be distinctly and positively traced. Thus it happens that a Central European, a Siberian, and a truly Arctic avifauna meet just in the region which Mr. Pleske has chosen for his monograph. The complexity of the migrating routes which pass along or cross this same section is well shown on the map accompanying Palmén's 'Zugstrassen der Vögel,' giving additional interest to the region, and explaining the fact that the author treats of over 200 species of birds, notwithstanding that the chief part of the country included is situated to the north of the Arctic Circle.

Mr. Pleske has had one great disadvantage: he has not had the opportunity of verifying his predecessors' statements and identifications by examining their specimens. In fact, most of the older records and many of the recent ones are not at all based on specimens, and those which have been collected are scattered all over the world. In many cases, therefore, there is a lack of *absolute* identification, which is felt more especially in the case of species, the subspecies or nearest allies of which, are very difficult to discriminate. Thus we are ignorant of the true status of '*Picus minor*' and of '*Pica rustica*' from that region, whether they are the Central European forms, or the Siberian subspecies, or both, or intermediate ones between the two. On the other hand, it is evident that the author, when having access to specimens, knows how to discriminate. Thus we note with satisfaction that for the first time in a work of that scope the Redpolls (*Acanthis*) are correctly understood, for Mr. Pleske clearly distinguishes, discusses, and describes three forms as occurring in the region, viz: *A. linaria*, *A. holbælli*, and *A. exilipes*.

The faunal synopsis is preceded by an introduction which treats of the distribution of the species in the region in general, and in the different botanical zones of the country. Then follows a bibliography of the ornithological literature relating to Lapland, apparently very full, sufficiently detailed, and embracing 113 separate titles. This large material is admirably handled when treating each individual species, which is preceded by a complete synonymy of all the published records of its occurrence within the region. It is only to be regretted that he should have paid any attention at all (cf. p. 210 in regard to *Falco candicans*) to Rev. Bowden's miserable 'The Naturalist in Norway,' for a worse fraud and humbug, as far as the ornithology at least is concerned, has never been published.

In the synopsis the author follows Dresser's arrangement and nomenclature; a course to be specially commended.

Altogether Mr. Pleske's book makes a most welcome addition to ornithological literature, and we most heartily congratulate him upon its completion.—L. S.

**W. E. Brooks on the Genus *Acanthis*.**—Mr. Brooks, the well-known Indian Ornithologist, now living in Milton, Ontario, has recently contributed to 'The Ibis' two papers\* on the Redpolls, especially the American species. The final result to which Mr. Brooks has arrived, he gives as follows: "We have, then, five very well-marked species of *Acanthis*, viz. *A. hornemanni*, *A. exilipes*, *A. rostrata*, *A. linaria*, and *A. rufescens*; also one doubtful bird, *A. linaria holballi*." Of this latter he says: "To me it is not a thoroughly satisfactory species, like the others, but at present its long bill is not easily accounted for. I am not partial to the trinomial system, but for convenience' sake this bird might stand as *Acanthis linaria holballi*. It is a variation not yet thoroughly worked out." The present reviewer, who, on an earlier page of this number of 'The Auk,' has attempted to put this form on a satisfactory footing, feels quite satisfied with this admission of Mr. Brooks, who, it must be remembered, is an opponent of the theory of evolution, and to whom a form must be a 'full' species or nothing. On the other hand it is very gratifying to find one's views in regard to so difficult a group as the Redpolls shared and sustained by an ornithologist of so great power of discrimination as Mr. Brooks, whose statements the present writer is glad to indorse in most cases. The differences of opinion between Mr. Brooks and myself relate directly to the question of 'species or subspecies,' or perhaps 'binomials or trinomials,' differences which, in fact, are quite unessential.—L. S.

**Stejneger on Japanese Woodpeckers.**—The first of a series of papers on Japanese birds, published in the 'Proceedings' of the United States

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\* Stray Ornithological Notes. Ibis, 1885, pp. 380-389; the portion relating to *Acanthis* on pp. 381-385. Additional Notes on the Genus *Acanthis*. Ibis, 1886, pp. 359-364.